

ago—and I hope my colleagues will consider doing the same—was to visit some of the Guard and Reserve units that are being activated.

When I asked for the opportunity to go to Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, just to spend a few moments with the men and women of the 126th Air Guard Refueling Wing, I wasn't certain whether they would consider this a colossal waste of time to have to have some political figure come and drop by. Exactly the opposite happened.

It was an important experience for me, and I also think for many of them, just to come by, have a few kind words, and to really thank them for the sacrifice they have shown for this country.

This is an Air Guard unit that has been activated many times. It was originally based at O'Hare and now is at Scott Air Force Base. They refuel planes and are very important to any military effort of the United States. There were about 340 members of this unit, men and women, who have joined the military, understanding their lives would be on the line. To go through the crowd there and meet each one of them, to talk for a few moments about their hometowns and their families, baseball, and so many other things that are just part of American life, was so refreshing and encouraging and, in a way, inspiring—spending that time with them and General Kessler, who is their commanding officer at Scott Air Force Base.

Theirs is a unit that has been activated, in part. And I am sure others will be as well. The 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria is also a unit that is likely to be mobilized—the 183rd Air National Guard Fighter Wing in Springfield, the 954th Air Reserve Support Unit out of Scott Air Force Base, the 182nd Air National Guard Security Forces, the 126th Air National Guard Security Forces, and the 183 National Guard Security Forces out of Springfield.

The one thing they raised to me—and I think at least bears some comment in this Chamber—was their concern about their families once they left. That is a natural feeling. It is one we ought to remind ourselves of, that we have passed laws to protect these men and women in uniform who are activated so that they can return to their jobs without any loss of status, and also to help them in some financial circumstances.

But beyond the laws, and beyond the Federal commitment, beyond the political speeches, I hope that every community across the United States will offer a helping hand to the families of those in the Guard and Reserve who are now called on to serve our country, as well as the active-duty men and women who are in harm's way at this moment in service to our Nation.

Many times, as I went around Illinois, people would say: Senator, what can I do? I have given blood. I have

sent my check in. The President has said to embrace my family. I did it; I do it every day. Is there anything more I can do? Think about the families of the men and women in uniform in your community who just may need a helping hand or a word of encouragement or perhaps a little more. That is something every one of us should do.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to address this issue of aviation security, which has been addressed on the floor by my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator KERRY. I note that Senator TORRICELLI is also in the Chamber. We were in a meeting yesterday to discuss security transportation security, not just aviation security. There are many of us served by Amtrak who believe that George Warrington, the CEO of Amtrak, has given us fair notice that he needs additional resources to make certain that Amtrak continues to be one of the safest ways to travel in America.

I believe there are over 600 Amtrak stations across this country. They are putting in place the kind of security we want, to make certain that no terrorist will see a target of opportunity in the metroliners or Amtrak trains that crisscross America.

I am happy, as I have noted at the beginning of my statement, to be a cosponsor of S. 1447 on aviation security. There are many provisions that I think are excellent. I am happy to join Senator HOLLINGS and so many others, on a bipartisan basis, to support the bill. But we would be remiss to believe that passing a bill on aviation security takes care of our obligation, our responsibility. Beyond that, we have to look to the traveling public and other vulnerabilities.

I agree with my colleagues who also have Amtrak service that we need to give to Amtrak the resources and the authority to make certain they can upgrade their security and take a look at a lot of their vulnerable infrastructure.

In this Chamber yesterday, Senator TORRICELLI talked about some of the tunnels. George Warrington of Amtrak has brought this to my attention. Many of these tunnels date back to the Civil War in their construction.

They do not have adequate safety in the tunnels so that if anything occurred, the people on the train would be in a very perilous situation. As these trains pass in the tunnels, literally hundreds if not thousands of passengers are trusting that we are doing everything we should do for the security of their transportation. I don't think we are doing enough. In fact, I believe we should include in this aviation security bill the authorization for Amtrak to receive additional funds for security.

I am troubled—I have to say this with some regret—that a lot of my col-

leagues in the Senate who have had a very negative view of Amtrak as a governmental function are translating that into a reluctance to address these security and safety measures. I am not one of them. If we take a look at the annual expenditure for transportation at the Federal level, we spend roughly \$33 billion a year on highways, \$12 billion a year on airports—before the crisis—and about \$500 million a year on Amtrak. Anyone in the State of Illinois and in many States across the Nation knows that if we are going to have a balanced transportation system, we need all three. We need aviation, good highway transportation and mass transit, and a national rail passenger corporation such as Amtrak.

It is no surprise to me, as I have been on the trains more often since September 11 than before, that more and more Americans are turning there.

We have an obligation to protect them, not to wait until there is an accident or something worse. I hope my colleagues will reconsider their opposition to Amtrak security authorization and appropriations. We should do it, and we should do it now without question.

Our commitment should be to every American to make their transportation as safe as humanly possible.

Let me address the aviation security issue for a minute. Yesterday, in my office I had representatives of the three major international corporations involved in aviation airport screening and security. They told me an interesting story. For those who may not be aware, until this moment in time, we have given to the airlines the responsibility to contract out the security and screening stations at the airports. We have found, as we have looked into it, that going to the lowest bidder in some circumstances meant that you didn't have an employee who was adequately compensated or trained.

I will quickly add that in my hometown of Springfield, IL, and many airports I have visited, the people working the screening equipment are doing an extraordinarily good job. Any one of us who has been through an airport at any time in the past few years knows that too often you have found at those security stations employees who were not taking it seriously.

Examine the analysis from the GAO, and it turns out that the turnover in some of the airports is 100 percent a year, 200 percent a year and, in the worst case, over 400 percent a year. The employees come and go if they are given an opportunity to take a job at Cinnabon or anywhere else in the airport. They are quickly gone from the screening stations. We have not taken this responsibility seriously, nor have the airlines.

Now we face a new day. The private contractors who came to me yesterday said that it is a different world altogether overseas. In fact, one of them